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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WATCH

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HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE
OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN
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Citizen Engagement Forum

Chattogram

Citizen Engagement Forum (CEF) Chattogram was arranged on 15 September 2022. This was conducted following a hybrid meeting as the guests attend via zoom and participants from Chattogram attend the session in Chattogram Circuit house with the BIGD team. Even after the bad weather, the participation rate was hundred percent which is noteworthy. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, Secretary, IMED, Ministry



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of Planning, stated that government officials must not be apathetic to the call of the people as it is a must to ensure good governance. Moreover, he also supports recognizing the observer team based on their contribution as that will motivate them to set this new trend of change. Md. Ashrafuddin, Divisional Commissioner, Chattogram, stated that he is ready to extend any form of help possible from his end and appreciated the process of involving citizen in public procurement. Md. Romjan Ali Promanik, Water Development Board, appreciated citizen involvement in the procurement process. But he identified a few disadvantages in the process, like some people tried to defame or spread accusations, creating problems for departments or projects. This is what made the check and balance system more important.



CEF, Chattogram

Cox's Bazar

CEF Cox Bazar was arranged in the Cox Bazar Circuit House on 22 September, 2022. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, Secretary, IMED, Ministry of Planning, stated that he wanted to create a balance between bureaucracy and common people. He also requested the local representatives to gain knowledge about the circumstances instead of seeing everything from a political lens to make the bureaucratic accountable with their logical statement supported by statistics and data. Md. Mamunur Rashid, Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, Cox Bazar, stated that he is ready to extend any form of help possible from his end. One contractor Nazmul Hasan appreciated the whole



CEF, Cox's Bazar

initiative and marked two major problems: lack of manpower and lengthy procedures. According to him, coordination among all the involved parties can make the process more efficient. One Citizen Observer team member said that citizen involvement is a must to ensure quality work is what he learned from his experience. This can create a check and balance and that can play an important role in development.

Moulvibazar

CEF Moulvibazar was arranged in Moulvibazar Circuit House on 20 October 2022. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, Secretary, IMED, Ministry of Planning, stated that government officials must take the concerns or complains of citizens seriously without any pre assumption of the complaints being true or false. This is important because citizens' voices must be heard to ensure good governance. Moreover, this will give them the motivation to get more involved in the process. He



CEF, Moulavibazar

also said that contractors need to realize that they are also common people in some ways, and that is why we all need to work for the greater good. Mir Nahid Hasan, Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, Moulvibazar stated that he is very much willing to continue this process and extend any help possible from his end to involve every department. He also added that Moulvibazar is working cordially to ensure the monitoring process and is free from allegations in various projects. Md. Akhteruzzaman, Executive Engineer, Water Development Board, appreciated the initiative of giving signboards on all the sites. The event ended with a prize-giving ceremony where the most active citizen observer team members got recognized for their services. One of them is Rubel Ahmed. He appreciated the project for including citizens in public procurement and requested the authority to take sudden natural calamities like flush floods into account.

Rangpur

CEF Rangpur was arranged in Rangpur Circuit House on 27 October 2022. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, Secretary, IMED, Ministry of Planning, stated that government officials must not



CEF, Rangpur

be apathetic to the call of the people. Moreover, this will give them recognition. Md. Asib Ahsan, District Commissioner and Magistrate, Rangpur, stated that he is ready to extend any help possible from his end. Saiful Islam, Assistant Engineer, stated that he would suggest that more initiatives like this and access to information are taken to develop the nation and people. He also requested to look into issues like difficulties regarding buying transportation for projects.

National Seminar Highlights Importance of Citizen Engagement in Public Procurement

A National Seminar on Social Awareness & Citizen Engagement in Public Procurement was held on 31 October, 2022.

Mr. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, Secretary, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), Ministry of Planning was the chief guest and Mohammed Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury, Director General, Central Procurement and Technical Unit (CPTU) was the chair.

Mr. Md. Aziz Taher Khan, Director of CPTU, welcomed everyone and stated the seminar's main objective. He highlighted the importance of citizen involvement in public procurement. He also mentioned that the government believes in the right to access information and in information dissemination.

Dr. Mirza Hassan, team lead from the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development.

(BIGD), gave a presentation on the evolution of the project, implementation process, project achievements, and factors that made the intervention successful. He also proposed an intervention model for a better future.

The presenter from BCCP (Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs) gave a brief on the objectives, focus, and scope of work of DIMAPPP. She then discussed the activities under DIMAPPP in detail, including playing a TVC and a short video on e-GP.

Dnet presented on citizen portal, mobile app, and social media. Then the moderator thanked the presenters and opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Mohammed Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury spoke about the importance of involving citizens in procurement projects. He said that citizens can help to ensure quality and transparency, and that research has shown that this can lead to better outcomes for everyone.

Ms. Syeda Salina Aziz of BIGD added that they follow a guideline and background check to select members for the engagement forum, minimizing the scope for exploitation. They also plan to compare the impact of their work with unions where they have not worked in the last four years, she added.

Dr. Imran Matin, Executive Director of BIGD shared his thoughts on future projects. He stressed the need for more complex and technical projects that engage citizens at a meso level. He also mentioned the importance of hard quality tests and social accountability.

Mr. ANM Mustafizur Rahman, Senior Procurement Specialist of the World Bank, spoke about the importance of citizen engagement in public procurement projects. He highlighted the success of Bangladesh's citizen engagement project and stressed the need for continued support from the World Bank.

Mr. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, Secretary of IMED spoke about the importance of citizen engagement in procurement and development projects. He highlighted the need for transparency and efficiency in the procurement process, and stressed the importance of working with contractors and citizens to ensure sustainable development.

In his concluding speech, the DG of CPTU announced several new initiatives to improve the public procurement process, including a tenderer database, e-challan, DPM system, ICT, ECMS, electronic audit, and NID integration. These initiatives are expected to make the process more transparent, efficient, and accountable.



Mr. Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, the IMED Secretary and program chair, expressed his thoughts and ideas

Disclaimer

Due to a lack of significant activity during the April-June quarter, no newsletter was published for that period. The July-September quarter saw two CEFs, and the October-December quarter saw two CEFs and one national seminar. For this reason, the two quarters have been merged and this newsletter is being published as a special 15th issue.

